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means for knowing it better, as the generations advance; and that, if we could know it better, we should be drawn more powerfully toward it."

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ASTROLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

The appearance of Jeremias' work¹ in English is declared by the author to constitute in effect a third edition. Mrs. Beaumont's translation has had the advantage of close co-operation and careful revision on the part of the author and is worthy of high praise. Occasionally, to be sure, the German original has unduly controlled the English expression, as for example in Vol. I, p. 343, where the following clause occurs, viz., "which unfortunately only still contained," and on p. 350, "further appears in proper names the divine name *ilu*." Sometimes the translation is less clear than the original as, e.g., on p. 237 of Vol. II, where the sentence "the victory would certainly be sealed according to oriental custom by the introduction of the worship, therefore of the worship of Yahweh," should read "by the introduction of the cultus of the country, to wit, the worship of Yahweh."

The special introduction by Dr. C. H. W. Johns, of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, points out the significance of this work as furnishing English readers with the best statement of the astral theory of the universe and its application to the interpretation of the Old Testament. Dr. Johns himself is careful not to commit himself to an acceptance of the theory; but, on the other hand, he evidently looks upon it with much favor and commends it to the serious consideration of all students of the Hebrew religion.

The view owes its existence to the indefatigable industry and the resourceful ingenuity of Dr. Hugo Winckler, of the University of Berlin. It has met with hearty approval from many German scholars, like Jeremias; but with strenuous opposition from many others. In this edition the first three chapters are given to setting forth the astral theory of the universe that is thought to have been current in the ancient East. Considerations of space do not permit an exposition of that theory here. Suffice it to say that its fundamental proposition is to the effect

¹ *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*. By A. JEREMIAS. Manual of Biblical Archaeology. English Edition Translated from the Second German Edition, Revised and Enlarged by the Author, by C. L. BEAUMONT. Edited by C. H. W. JOHNS. [Theological translation library, Vols. XXVIII and XXIX.] 2 vols. New York: Putnam, 1911. xxx+352, xii+331 pages. \$7.00.

that everything in the world below is but a copy of its original in the heavens above. The course of events here consequently is determined by the course of events there. He who can read the meaning of the heavens can tell, not only what has taken place upon earth, but what will take place.

The evidence urged in support of this theory involves the attribut on to the old Babylonians of a high degree of astronomical lore. But when claims of this sort were scrutinized by one who not only is versed in Assyrian but is also a practical astronomer, viz , Dr. F. X. Kugler,² they were found not to have a sufficient basis in facts. For example, the contention that the Babylonians knew of the precession of the equinoxes is shown to be untenable; the claim that the zodiac was divided perpendicularly by the Babylonians is made to give way to the demonstration that they divided it longitudinally; and the Babylonian year, instead of having been a *sun* year, is shown to have been a *moon* year, with intercalated months. These propositions are vital in the astral theory; with them the structure stands or falls.

On the strength of this theory, Jeremias and other supporters maintain that monotheism and truly spiritual religion developed in Israel as early as the days of Abraham, having been acquired from Babylonia. The many strong facts so easily brought forward against this interpretation of early Hebrew experience are explained by Jeremias as due to the fact that there was from the earliest times in Israel an esoteric religion in the possession of a few choice spirits while the masses were content with a cultus that was essentially pagan. The difficulty with this view is, of course, the fact that the very best men in Israel betray no consciousness of this esoteric monotheism until very late in the nation's life but, on the contrary, furnish abundant evidence that they were dominated by crass polytheistic ideas.

A few illustrations of the astral method of interpretation may be cited. The garden of Eden represents the entire universe in miniature; its two trees represent the upper and under worlds. The twelve loaves of shew-bread correspond to the twelve months of the year. The seven-branched candlestick represents the seven planets. The two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, at the entrance to the temple represent the two turning-points (solstices) of the zodiac. The names of the twelve tribes correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac and the sentences of Jacob's Blessing play upon the zodiacal significance of the names. The prophet's

² Especially in his *Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel* (1907); 2d ed., 1909; and *Im Bannkreis Babels* (1910).

mantle of I Kings 11:29 ff. "signifies the cosmos, or the microcosmos of the kingdom, or what is in idea the same, knowledge and power over fate." The combat between David and Goliath is of cosmic significance, Goliath being probably the mythical dragon representative of the winter season, while David is representative of the summer season. The word "shibboleth" was possibly chosen (Judg. 12:5 f.) with reference to its allusion to Ishtar, "the heavenly virgin with the ears of corn," whose popular cult in Israel "is attested by the account of the festival of the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter."

Exception may be taken to various statements lying wholly outside the disputed realm of the astral theory. The very first paragraph makes the somewhat rash statement that "history clearly shows that the 2,000 years between the founding of Babylon and the subjection of the Eastern world to the West were under the intellectual domination of Babylon." This seems to reflect on the one hand too slight a comprehension and appreciation of the contribution of the Egyptian civilization to the thought of western Asia and on the other a failure to do justice to the distinctive and independent thought of Israel. The evidence of the excavations in Palestine tells strongly against the predominance of Babylonian ideas and customs there. The influence of Egypt is very much more apparent. Again, to say "we know of no uncivilized time of Israel" (I, 273) is to plead guilty to a certain hopeless kind of blindness. The actions of the leaders of the early Israelites are in many cases psychologically incomprehensible on the supposition that they were the representatives of an elevated stage of civilization. Their thoughts and deeds comport far better with a nomadic and almost barbarous state. Solomon's temple was the first great building to be erected in Canaan by the Hebrews, so far as our records go, and for its construction recourse was had to the services of a master-workman trained in Phoenicia.

Yet again, to say that "differentiation between Judaism before and after the Exile must be given up" is to set at naught all the results of modern Bible-study. Such an opinion reflects its author's inability to enter into any genuine appreciation of the history of thought in Israel. He has become the protagonist of a one-sided interpretation which attempts to solve all the problems of Hebrew religion without any real knowledge of what the problems are.

While the astral theory sets aside ruthlessly the results of the historical treatment of the biblical material, it will have become evident to most readers that it offers little comfort to the supporters of the traditional interpretation. There is nothing here of special divine revela-

tion and little left of the thought that Israel was a "peculiar people." She stands rather in the rôle of an inveterate borrower from Babylon, who in most cases improved the quality of the borrowed materials after they came into her possession. The Old Testament instead of being "the word of God" becomes a repository of outworn and thinly disguised astrological superstitions. Myth and history are so inextricably mingled that little escapes the malarial influence of the mythical atmosphere. But, while much more might be said by way of disagreement, it remains true that Mrs. Beaumont has performed good service in placing this book within the reach of English readers. They have now no excuse for professing ignorance of the meaning of the astral theory of the universe as applied to the interpretation of the Old Testament. Moreover, though Dr. Jeremias' interpretations are for the most part vitiated by his subservience to this theory, yet the book presents very much Babylonian and Assyrian material not elsewhere easily accessible, which is of great value for the illumination of many passages in the Old Testament. It is regrettable that the work was not done sooner. Too often German phantasies are not introduced to English readers until they have had their day and ceased to be in their original habitat.

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